

Region 5 Works Council

Career and Technical Education Awareness

Grant Application

Submitted March 26, 2014

Introduction

The Region 5 Works Council respectfully submits the following application for a Career and Technical Education Awareness Grant. Region 5 consists of Boone, Hamilton, Hancock, Hendricks, Johnson, Madison, Marion, Morgan and Shelby counties in Central Indiana.

Our Council's grant application directly targets specific factors driving the awareness gap for Central Indiana students and their parents that deprive them of the ability to understand, target and pursue education and career opportunities in high value, high wage and high demand ("HVHWHD") middle skill occupations in the region. For purposes of the grant application, such occupations in Region 5 may be clustered, for example, in middle skill work (requiring more than a high school diploma and less than a four year college degree) in advanced manufacturing and logistics; construction trades; energy; life sciences (including health care and agriculture); and technology (including both information technology itself and applied technology across other sectors).

Our application has been prepared under the leadership of Dr. Robert L. Taylor, Superintendent Lebanon Community School Corporation and Remo Mezzetta, Director of Business Development at Mezzetta, Inc., a construction services company headquartered in Region 5 – both are members of the Region 5 Works Council. We seek to build awareness of employment opportunities and pathways in the construction industry sector in Central Indiana. We request sixty-five thousand dollars (\$65,000) for the specific purpose to develop and to begin to model in one cluster – construction trades, with subsets of industrial (manufacturing and logistics), road and highway, office and commercial, and residential construction – a regional template for sector-specific communication that lifts awareness of opportunity; clarifies nature of work; identifies educational pathways; and motivates interested students to pursue such opportunities.

The particular target groups for our awareness effort are juniors and seniors in Region 5 high schools during the 2014-2015 school year, their parents or legal guardians, and their school counselors and administrators. Our partners will include educational counselors and administrators at Region 5 high schools, post-secondary educational and training institutions, industry trade organizations and industry-sponsored training institutions.

We recognize differences between various industry clusters, and we are aware of and deeply appreciate the strong prior and continuing work of Hire Technology in building similar awareness in the advanced manufacturing and logistics sector. We intend this effort in the construction sector to both broaden the scope and deepen the options for sectors to build awareness of their HVHWHD middle skills opportunities in the region.

Statement of Regional Need

Student (and parent/guardian) consideration of the construction industry as a viable post-secondary career pathway is severely limited by both stereotypical misperception and an acute lack of accurate and current information regarding the wages, benefits, and long term career opportunities that are currently available in the construction trade job market in Central Indiana. Industry research, along with

both a qualitative and quantitative analysis of relevant and pertinent data relating to engagement, training and retention of skills tradesmen, indicates that this misperception by both students and their adult influencers has resulted in both a workforce deficit (demand far exceeds supply) and lost employment opportunities. This general lack of awareness and unchallenged perpetuation of misinformation concerning the construction industry in general, and specifically its skilled trades, is unintentionally reinforced by a lack of awareness of school career and educational counseling personnel of meaningful and relevant educational opportunities. Neither students nor parents nor counselors nor administrators understand the career and earning opportunities that exist in the construction industry's middle skill jobs.

This lack of awareness comes not from any intentional effort to direct students away from the construction industry; it is more an unfortunate by product of years of focus almost solely on the promotion of a four year post-secondary learning experience as the most viable and lucrative avenue for income generating opportunities for all students. The unspoken message has been that construction and skilled trades employment opportunities are only for those students who desire a substandard and less rewarding career path.

To change the student, parent and counselor perceptions that rise from this culture of unintentional exclusion, we seek a renewed and more intense focus on the opportunities, benefits and rewards of a middle skills career in construction. We intend to build a coordinated and collaborative awareness initiative, at the school level, within our current educational programming. We seek not only to reverse the misperceptions about careers and rewards in the construction industry, but also to inform and promote the many opportunities that exist in today's and tomorrow's construction industry.

While our operating focus for the construction industry awareness campaign is student, parent and counselor perception, we are keenly (for businesses in the construction trades, painfully) aware of the present and growing gap between the availability of individuals educated with the hard knowledge and soft skills required in HVHWHD middle skill construction work and the demand for such individuals. Even before the effect of building retirements within the construction industry, there simply are not enough skilled trades employees to meet the industry's need for them. As the region continues to address its infrastructure needs, and as the synergies of economic development and regional strength work to build Central Indiana, lack of adequate educated middle skills construction employees is a constraint not only on individual opportunity but on regional development and strength.

The long standing misperceptions that lie at the core of the problem can be changed to more informed awareness through the collaborative efforts of industry and education. Working in tandem, industry experts and educational professionals can Engage-Enlighten-Elevate both students and parents. Correcting the current misunderstanding of the opportunities and benefits that exist in the Central Indiana construction industry both today and in the future will be an immediate and positive result of this planned initiative.

The meaningful engagement of students, parents, and school personnel in a process of information sharing focused on creating more knowledgeable decision makers will yield increased numbers of students pursuing education for a career in HVHWHD skilled work in the construction industry.

That is our goal.

Project Description, Evaluation, Sustainability

Here is what we intend to do:

1. **Provide school guidance counselors from all Region 5 high schools a full day professional development in service focused solely on the HVHWHHD middle skill opportunities and educational pathways in Region 5.** (We estimate 41 traditional public high schools in Region 5 with CTE offerings; charter, private and parochial high schools will be invited to participate.) This professional development opportunity will focus on:

- a. Awareness of the opportunities and benefits currently available in the construction industry (presented by industry experts and CTE educational professionals)
- b. Information about the post-secondary training and educational opportunities currently available in Region 5 for students pursuing a career in the construction industry.
- c. Information about the in-career advancement opportunities available that intentionally enable post-entry career advancement and growth (presented by industry experts and Region 5 educational institutions that currently offer such post-secondary advancement opportunities).
- d. Review current media and technology-based information opportunities that can drive and support on going student and parent awareness of construction industry opportunities. We intend these to include a website that will be designed specifically to support the industry pathways, involved high schools and relevant post-secondary offerings within Region 5. The web site will contain relevant links, frequently asked questions, and trade specific information that can invite and support student inquiry.
- e. Provide a take away tool kit that will contain information about specific skilled trades, including a quick reference guide to key aspects of the industry and its pathways to answer questions and support the school counselor with ongoing student awareness activities and parent education materials.
- f. Establish a network of active CON/ED partnerships. This will bring together a representative from the CONstruction industry to partner with each EDucation counselor. The purpose of these partnerships is to enable a meaningful one to one relationship between the industry expert and the educational influencer. It has the additional benefit of creating more intensive collaboration to assist in elevating student and parent awareness of the construction industry's HVHWHHD opportunities and pathways.

2. **Develop a Region 5 specific web site dedicated to awareness and information sharing on the construction industry and related HVHWHHD opportunities in the skilled trades.** This will be dedicated to construction opportunities in the region. The web site will be professionally developed and maintained using grant funds for at least one year (subsequent maintenance will be provided via further industry and school support). The website will be designed with a focus on age appropriate graphics, content, and current information about industry opportunities. A variety of links and interactive contact points will be available. Information for the various regional industry associations and post-secondary institutions will be embedded in the site.

3. **Develop an e-newsletter that will be sent to school counselors on a quarterly basis.**

a. The newsletter will provide suggestions for appropriate counselor practices with regard to construction career opportunities and provide both regional and national information on current trends and opportunities in the construction skilled trades industry.

b. The newsletter will be customizable so that each school could forward it on to students and parents attending that specific school. School logos, specific school information, and opportunities will be able to be added to the newsletter to promote local involvement in the awareness process.

4. **Establish at least one annual school based Construction Skilled Trades Awareness & Information Event at each Region 5 high school.**

a. Each school that sends a representative to the professional development activity will qualify for a financial incentive to host a school-based construction skilled trades industry awareness and information event. Each qualifying school will receive \$150 to support this event. The individual school will be allowed to determine the best use of these funds as long as they support the school based event. This could offset event costs; provide informational materials; or support informational media that is provided to students and parents.

b. Each school also will establish a survey instrument to measure participant perception of the event and satisfaction or issues with it. This data will be collected by the Region 5 Works Council and utilized to help ascertain program effectiveness. This survey could also be built into the proposed Web site so that data collection could be centralized and accessed more easily.

5. **Create a Regional Media Campaign.** This will not only focus on students and parents but also provide the general public with a more informed understanding of the training, employment opportunities, wages and benefits associated with a career in the HVHWHD skilled trades work in the construction industry in the region. This campaign will consist of visual media, print media, and social media events.

6. **Extend the campaign beyond the grant.** It is our belief that once launched the combined interest and attention of both education and industry resources will sustain and extend the awareness work beyond 2014-15. In addition, it is possible that the same awareness focus used for rising K-12 students may have benefits in attracting displaced or even embedded adult workers in other areas of the economy. And we intend this to be, along with Hire Technology, a model for other industry sectors to consider.

Performance Measures and Evaluation

We will measure our direct performance under the grant by answering the following questions (among others):

- a. How many school guidance counselors attended the professional development opportunity? What were their post-event actions and results?
- b. How many ConEd partnerships were created in 2014-15? What did the partnerships seek to do and what were their accomplishments? How many students did they impact?
- c. Once the web-site is up, how many direct users, repeat users and visitors did it draw? What were their activities on the web-site? Where are they from (and how many cross-link to

Region 5 Works Council Career and Technical Education Awareness Grant Application

- active ConEd partnerships? To what extent did their visit to and activity on the web-site cause them to take action concerning a construction industry HVHWHHD educational pathway?
- d. How many schools used the newsletters they received, and how did they use them?
 - e. How many schools had a Construction Skilled Trades Awareness & Information Event? What were the nature, attendance, agenda, content and results of the event?
 - f. What did the regional media campaign eventually create, how and how broadly and deeply did it penetrate Region 5, and what level of awareness of HVHWHHD opportunities in the construction industry in Region 5 did it create?

The ultimate evaluation of the success of the awareness initiative is an increase in the number of participants, concentrators and completers in HVHWHHD skilled trades pathways in Region 5. We will seek to baseline those numbers as of the 2013-14 school year and measure changes in 2014-14 and the years following. In addition, we will evaluate the influence of the awareness activities through a collection of data that derives from both end of activity surveys and ongoing data collection. Data collection processes will include:

- a. Participant evaluations for counselor professional development, school sponsored awareness events, parent feedback forms, and electronic monitoring of the website.
- b. Electronic surveys for attendees (students, parents, and industry representatives) at school based awareness events, accomplished through a low or no cost use of currently available on line survey applications; feedback questionnaires from students participating in events, visiting the web-site, engaging with counselors or otherwise receiving awareness information.
- c. Review of post-secondary training and service providers to determine if there was an increase in inquiry or engagement by students who participated in the Region 5 events.

Fiscal Agent

Our fiscal agent will be the Lebanon Community School Corporation, c/o Dr. Robert Taylor, Superintendent (505 Ransdell Road, Lebanon, IN 46052, (765) 483-3030, Taylorb@leb.K12.in.us). Remo Mezzetta (6983 Corporate Circle, Indianapolis, IN 46278, (317) 328-8003, remom@mezzettainc.com) will co-manage and with Dr. Taylor oversee and approve the expenditure of funds under the grant, providing a school-industry partnership in the management of grant resources.

Conclusion

We believe this approach will target awareness in one specific industry sector with HVHWHHD needs and opportunities; will provide a platform for ongoing efforts in the construction industry sector after the grant funds have been exhausted; will serve as a pilot for possible application to other industry sectors, with necessary and appropriate variations; and, most importantly, will drive up the awareness of, interest in and pursuit of educational pathway opportunities that will improve economic opportunities for Region 5 students and provide valuable employee resources for the construction industry that will build and maintain the essential facilities in Central Indiana in the decades to come.

We invite your comments and questions. They may be best communicated directly to Bob Taylor and/or Remo Mezzetta as noted above or if needed or useful to David Shane, Chair of the Region 5 Works Council, at dnshane@comcast.net or (317) 748-1102. Thank you.

Region 5 Works Council Career and Technical Education Awareness Grant Application

Proposed Budget

Sources: Available Funds			
Grant Funds	\$65,000		
Matching Industry Generated Funds	<u>\$35,000</u>		
Total Operating Funds	\$100,000	\$100,000	
Uses: Targeted Awareness Initiatives			
In-School Focused Efforts			
In-School Guidance PD Conference			
• PR Materials	\$400		(invitations)
• Training materials	\$4,100		(82 sets x \$50/set)
• General Conference Expenses	\$1,000		
• Meals	\$1,640		(82 attendees x \$20/attendee)
• Presenters' Fees	\$4,000		
• Conference Coordinator	<u>\$1,000</u>		
		\$12,140	
In-School Awareness Efforts			
• In-School Awareness Events Incentive	\$12,300		(82 events x \$150/event)
• Student Information Kits	\$16,000		(2,000 kits x \$8/kit)
• Parent Information Packet	\$3,000		(1,000 packets x \$3/packet)
• Promotional Banners	\$4,100		(41 banners x \$100/banner)
• Other In School Awareness	<u>\$4,100</u>		(41 schools x \$100/school)
		\$39,500	
General Awareness Efforts			
• E Newsletter (design/content mgmt.)	\$4,000		(\$1,000/issue x 4 issues)
• Media Coordinator/Marketing	<u>\$4,000</u>		
•		\$8,000	
Results & Impact Assessment			
• Survey Development/Tabulation	<u>\$1,000</u>		
		\$1,000	
Overhead			
• ED/CON Coordinator	\$2,000		
• Fiscal Agent	<u>\$2,000</u>		
		\$4,000	
Total Projected Uses		\$64,640	
Possible Other Uses			
• Set aside for possible web-site & support	\$6,500		
• Contingency & expansion	<u>\$28,860</u>		
		\$35,360	
Total Operating Uses		\$100,000	

Proposed Timeline for Implementation

May to July 2014	Plan and develop School Counselor Professional Development Conference
May to July 2014	Interview and select the following support positions <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Conference planner/coordinator2. E –Newsletter developer and editor3. Web Site Developer and Content Coordinator4. Media/Marketing Coordinator5. Data Collection Coordinator
June to August 2014	Develop the following <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. School Counselor Information Packet2. Student Information Tool Kit3. Parent Information Packet4. School Promotional Banners Establish CON/ED Partnership Program
September 2014	Host School Counselor Conference (site TBD)
Oct 2014 to Feb 2015	Host Individual School Awareness Activities
Oct 2014 to May 2015	Conduct and Implement Regional Multi-Media Information Campaign
February to April 2015	Assess awareness efforts & consider next steps <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Continuation of Construction Trades campaign2. Extension of efforts to other sector campaigns
April 2015	Conduct Student & Parent Surveys
May 2015	Prepare and Provide Interim Report